



AXE FACTS

INFO for Owners of Roland & BOSS Guitar Products Volume 6/ No. 2

New Product News

Summer NAMM Report

Summer is here and that can mean only one thing for the musical instrument industry: Summer NAMM. Held each year in July, this trade show is a guitar player's Mecca with tons of great new gear amidst the sweltering Nashville heat. Truth be told, much of this heat was coming straight from the Roland/BOSS booth, where some amazing new guitar products were being shown. Let's take a brief look at each one...

VGA-7 V-Guitar Amplifier

The VGA-7 V-Guitar Amplifier is the world's first digital modeling guitar amplifier that simulates not only guitar amps, but guitars as



well. This 130-watt marvel has 20 distinct COSM amp models onboard—including vintage and modern tube amps, solid state and acoustic instrument amps, plus speaker cabinet simulations. And using any steel-string guitar (equipped with an optional GK-2A pickup), you can tap into 26 COSM Guitar models including electrics, acoustics, and hollow-body types—even some cool "guitar-meets-synth" sounds. Of course, there's also plenty of onboard effects and Patch memories to customize and

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Paul Jackson on the GT-5

For the last two decades, Paul Jackson Jr. has been the studio guitarist of choice for countless pop, R&B, and jazz groups. In the process, he's played on some of the best-selling records of all time, including Michael Jackson's *Thriller* and Whitney Houston's self-titled debut, as well as albums by Madonna, Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole, George Benson, and Luther Vandross. Jackson's other credits include Jewel, Steely Dan, Al Jarreau, Mary J. Blige, Destiny's Child, and the Backstreet Boys, making him arguably the busiest session guitarist around.



While Paul often gets hired to provide the "Paul Jackson Jr. sound," he knows that the studio guitarist's main priority is to play for the song first. And a big part of that job is creating a guitar tone that's just right for the song. "You can't spend all day trying to get the perfect sound," says Jackson. "Usually you have about five

minutes to get your sound. That's why I always bring my BOSS **GT-5** [Guitar Effects Processor] to

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The Power of the Pickup

Roland GK-Ready Guitar Gear

As you probably know, normal electric guitars are mono. That's because the output of the six magnetic pole pieces in a traditional pickup are combined into a single output. But what if it were possible to isolate the sound of each string? You could then run each string sound through its own pitch-shifter, changing the tuning of your guitar, or tune each string to a different pitch for alternate tunings.

Let's go a step further. What if you could take the signal from each string and give it a completely different sound? Or use different sounds on different strings? Well, by attaching a Roland GK-2A Divided Pickup to your guitar, you can do all of this and more! All it takes is some "GK-Ready" guitar gear. Read on.

The GR-33 Guitar Synth

The GR-33 is the fastest guitar synth Roland has ever made. Some guitar players may recall that the earliest guitar synths were slow and hard to play. This is no longer the case. Current pitch-detection technology has resulted in guitar synths like the new GR-33 that are very fast, stable, and accurate. In fact, they are usually more accurate than the guitar players using the synth (sorry, guys).

The GR-33 has an all-new sound engine based on the Roland JV-1080, with 384 Tones ranging from realistic piano, string, horn, percussion and other traditional



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store your sounds. Put simply, this is the amp you've been waiting for.

AW-3 Dynamic Wah

The first of two new BOSS pedals, the AW-3 Dynamic Wah is the first compact wah pedal to incorporate human voice-type vowel sounds through a new "Humanizer" mode. Of course, you can also choose from dynamic wah, standard up-and-down auto-wah effects, plus a Tap Tempo mode and resonant synth-like Sharp mode. Both fixed and auto-wah sounds can be tweaked using the knobs or controlled via optional expression pedal. And bass players take note: there's a dedicated Bass input for great-sounding bass wah effects.



PH-3 Phase Shifter

The new PH-3 Phase Shifter is BOSS' ultimate phaser pedal. That's because in addition to offering standard up-and-down cycles, the PH-3 can produce entirely upward or downward moving sounds through its new "Rise" and "Fall" effects—a world's first! You also get plenty of vintage phasing sounds including 4-, 8-, 10-, and 12-stage phasers, plus a cool Step effect. And syncing these effects is as simple as tapping the pedal to the tempo desired. For maximum control, connect an optional expression pedal to control both rate and filter in real time as you play.



JC-120 Jazz Chorus

So you're probably wondering what the JC-120 Jazz Chorus amp is doing in our new product roundup, right? After all, this amp is one of Roland's longest-selling products, used by professionals the world over. Well, the reason is that Roland is now manufacturing this legendary amp with silver speaker cones—the same silver cones used to give the original JC-120 the cleanest-sounding tone in history. But rest assured, nothing else has changed. The new silver-coned JC-120 still offers two 12-inch

speakers with 120 watts of power, two input channels, lush onboard chorus, and superb sound quality.

VS-840GX Digital Studio

If you're a guitar player looking for a digital recorder, the new VS-840GX might be just what the doctor ordered. This 8-track V-Studio with built-in Zip250™ drive has 128 Virtual Tracks, onboard studio-quality effects, COSM Guitar and Bass Amp models, a Bass Simulator, and more. A new Speaker Modeling algorithm lets you reference your mix across a range of popular speaker simulations using the Roland DS-90A 24-bit Digital Reference Monitors. And with the VS-840GX's new .WAV conversion function, you can easily transfer your tracks to a PC for creating CDs or MP3 files (optional VS4S-1 SCSI board required). There's also a separate JamTracks™ disk with pre-recorded backing tracks in nine musical styles to get you started.



JamTracks™

Bundled with every VS-840GX, JamTracks is a Zip250™ disk created to give guitar players a fun and interactive way to jam with talented studio musicians from the comfort of their V-Studio. The JamTracks disk contains professionally recorded backing arrangements in nine musical styles including Blues, R&B, Motown, Rock, Latin, Alternative, Country, and more. These arrangements feature a complete rhythm section including drums, bass, keyboards and other instruments—plus a specially programmed guitar insert effect for playing along and recording. You can even take individual tracks, such as drums, and copy them for use in your own songs. Too cool!



Be sure to check out all of the above products at Roland's newly designed website, www.rolandus.com.

sounds to way-out-there ambient, industrial, wave, looped and very modern sounds.

But great sounds are just the beginning. Another killer feature of the GR-33 is that it can convert guitar into MIDI. This gives you the ability to use other synths, computers, sequencers, and MIDI gear—all without having to learn how to play keyboards. Your instrument is guitar, and now it can be as good a MIDI instrument as a keyboard, and in many ways, even better.

VG-88 V-Guitar System

Several years ago, Roland developed something called Composite Object Sound Modeling, or COSM. The Roland VG-88 [and the new VGA-7 amplifier, page 1] uses COSM technology to model the sounds and performance characteristics of a wide variety of popular amps *and guitars*. By using the GK-2A Divided Pickup and sending six individual signals to the VG-88, you can literally change the sound of one guitar into the sound of a completely different one.

With COSM, a Strat™ can sound exactly like a Paul™, a Rick®, or pretty much any guitar sound you want: acoustic, electric, nylon string, metal body—even a banjo. And if you recall the example of six separate pitch shifters—one for each string—well, the VG-88 also does that, so any possible alternate tuning can be achieved from a GK2A-equipped guitar. And not only that, but the VG-88 has a standard 1/4" input as well, so you can use your regular guitar output and run it through the VG-88's COSM-modeled amps and 24-bit digital effects. There's nothing more advanced in guitar processing anywhere.

So if you're looking to take your guitar further, consider installing a GK-2A Divided Pickup. It's not MIDI, but you can get MIDI from it—and a whole lot more with a Roland GR-33. And with the VG-88, it doesn't change your sound, but it can turn your guitar's sound into any other guitar sound you can imagine—electric, acoustic, and even nylon string. Want to go all the way? Install a GK-2A and get 'em both!

sessions. It has all the sounds I need, and it's easy to program, so I can create whatever sound I have in mind in minutes."

So as a special for *Axe Facts* readers, here's a couple of Paul's secrets to getting great tone with the GT-5:

Natural Tone

"I do a lot of direct recording with the GT-5. Usually I'll turn on the speaker simulator when I'm using the preamp or the amp simulators, but I'll roll off a lot of the highs. Your average guitar cabinet doesn't go over 8kHz—usually they only go to 6kHz—so if you're using frequencies above that, it's not going to sound like a real amp. That's a key to my delay sound. I usually set the high cutoff at 4kHz. That softens the delay and gives it a nice, natural tone."

Super Lush Chorus

"For a nice, pretty chorus sound I have the effects in this order, from guitar to amp: compressor/limiter, EQ, modulation (set to Harmonist), chorus, and noise reduction. I use the continuous controller as a volume pedal, and I place the delay after the volume pedal. That way the delay swells along with the volume. If you put the delay before the volume pedal, the effect will shut off when you turn the volume off, which can be good if, for example, you want total silence during a break.

"I use the Harmonist in addition to the chorus because it adds more width. The Harmonist is set to two-voice stereo: HR1 is on Fast mode, Fine Pitch is at +8, Pre-delay is 10ms, Feedback is 30, and Level is 18. HR2 is also on Fast mode, Fine Pitch is +7, Pre-delay is 5ms, Feedback is also about 30, and Level is also 18. The direct level is all the way up. The main thing is to have the Pre-delay for each voice offset by about 5ms, which is what makes the sound so thick. Adjust the chorus to taste with the Harmonist off. Then when you kick it on you'll really hear the difference."

TIPS & TRICKS

GR-30 Guitar Synth Hold

One of the coolest things to do with a Roland guitar synth is to play a chord with a synth sound, step on the Hold pedal, and then play guitar over the sustained chord. Here's how to do it with a GR-30:



The GR-30 has many different kinds of Hold functions. The kind that does what we want here is called SOS (Sostenuto).

1. Rotate the Edit Target knob to select "FOOT PEDAL".
2. Rotate the Parameter Select knob to select "C" for HOLD TYPE.
3. Press EDIT.
4. Press the Patch/Value buttons to select "SOS".

That's it! Try using this with a fat organ sound.

BR-8 Hear EFX but Record Dry

Often the guitar sound you think will work in your final mix isn't quite it, or the effect you thought was so cool when you recorded it doesn't quite make it in the end. Of course, you could always record your guitar track without effects and add them later, but the BOSS BR-8 does something even cooler—it lets you record dry while hearing the effect.

Here's how you do it:

1. Press UTILITY.
2. Press the Right Cursor button to select "EFFECT". (The icon looks like a little BOSS pedal.)
3. Press ENTER.
4. Rotate the Value dial to select "INPUT (REC DRY)".

That's it! Don't forget to change it back when you want to record with effects.

BR-8 Stereo Effects

Many of the guitar effects on the BR-8 are in stereo. Next time you record a guitar track, or just want to listen, arm two tracks instead of one. For example, select the JC-120 effect patch and compare the sound with just one track, and then two. You'll never record mono guitar again!

VG-88 Direct & COSM Guitar

Many of the factory presets on the VG-88 don't feature the direct guitar sound; you only hear the COSM-modeled sound from the GK-2A pickup. But the VG-88 can process direct guitar signal as well. Here's how to hear it:

1. Press the COSM Guitar button.
2. Press the Right Page button to select "MIXER".
3. Press F6 to enter the Mixer Parameters.
4. Press F1, if necessary, to select "BALANCE".
5. Rotate the Value dial counterclockwise to increase the direct level.

This increases the level of the normal guitar sound. If you turn this



control all the way, you won't hear any modeled guitar.



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- JS-5 Demo Video & Compact Pedal CD

JS-5 Video, BOSS Compact Pedal CD & Guidebook

Wanna learn how to create professional four-part backing arrangements without any knowledge of MIDI or sequencing? Then get your hands on the new **BOSS JS-5 JamStation Demo Video**. As a compact backing and jamming partner, the JS-5 gives musicians a range of flexible, high-quality backing patterns, tools to create new patterns, and even provides up to 32 minutes of digital audio recording—no recording or programming knowledge required! This video will show you just how easy it is...

Or, if pedals are more your thing, you should definitely check out the new **BOSS Compact Pedal CD** and **Guitar Effects Guidebook**. The BOSS Compact Pedal CD is an interactive

multimedia disc for Mac® or PC loaded with all the information, photos, and audio demos you can handle on BOSS' most popular compact pedals. Or, if good ol' fashioned printed pages are more your thing, pick up the BOSS Guitar Effects Guidebook. This informative booklet is packed with photos, specifications, and applications for every compact pedal and effects processor BOSS makes.

To order your copy of the new BOSS JS-5 Demo Video, Compact Pedal CD or Guitar Effects Guidebook for just \$5 each, call the Roland SuperStore at (800) 386-7575 or surf on over to the SuperStore section of the all-new www.rolandus.com website.

